

An aerial photograph of a densely packed refugee settlement in Rwanda. The settlement is built on a hillside, with numerous small, simple houses with light-colored roofs. The area is surrounded by green fields and some trees. In the background, there are rolling hills under a clear sky.

# Keeping Adolescent Refugee Girls in School: Challenges and Response from Rwanda

# Overview Presentation



- ✓ Case Study- Adolescent Girls Programming
  - ✓ Implications for Education Programing
  - ✓ Refugee Situation in Rwanda

# Typical Life of an Adolescent

*As a child, it's almost impossible to get what you really need in the Gihembe refugee camp. They give us 9 exercise books when we study 14 subjects. We run out of fire wood ..... for me we are 7 children at home only 3 are in high school, ....our parents use money to buy firewood which meant for other things. And children who try to go outside the camp for firewood are punished and all this results in realizing that your parents are not able to take care of you and you feel like dropping out of school or running away from home to join some gangs”*

-- Keza, 14 year



# Key issues affecting education for adolescents girls



1. **Facilities for quality education:** *Classes capacities, Learning facilities, Playing grounds*
2. **Survival + Transactional sex** – *heightened by material needs i.e. school uniforms and scholastic materials*
3. **Limited access to livelihood opportunities + vocational training**
4. **Harmful practices/behavior** - *alcohol misuse, absenteeism*
5. **Child marriage and teenage pregnancy** – *school dropout*
6. **Caretaker/breadwinner roles**
7. **Sexual exploitation including rape + transmission of STIs/HIV AIDS**

# Refugee Situation

## REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN RWANDA

150,194

as of 31st January 2019

**CHILDREN (0 – 17years)**  
50%

**WOMEN & CHILDREN**  
76%

**FEMALE**  
51%

**MALE**  
49%

**ADULTS (18-59 years)**  
47%

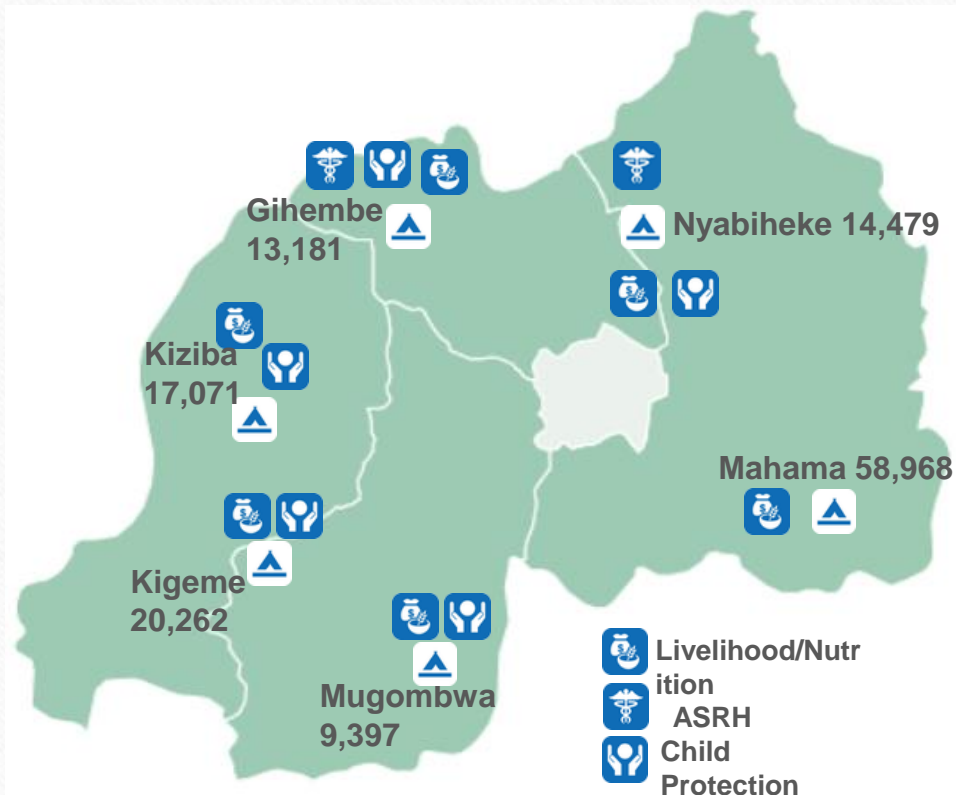
**ELDERLY**  
4%

## MAIN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

DRC – (75,775) = 51.7%  
BURUNDI – (69,524) = 47.8%  
OTHER – (4,895) = 0.4%

# Refugee Response

## Plan International Rwanda



- ✓ Refugee response started in 2014 - all refugee camps addressing child protection and SGBV needs.
- ✓ In 2017/18, focus on the five Congolese refugee camps as UNHCR implementing partner for Child Protection.
- ✓ Funding to date has reached €5.9 million with major partners including UNHCR, WFP, SIDA, and UNICEF.

# Refugee Response Program Strategy

---



Reproductive  
Health and  
Empowerment of  
adolescent girls

Nutrition  
Education and  
Livelihoods

Child Protection

# Refugee Education Overview

**NATIONAL SCHOOLS +  
SCHOOLS IN CAMPS**

49,336

**CURRENTLY ENROLLED AT  
DIFFERENT UNIVERSITIES**

614

**OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN  
(OOSC)**

10,289 (25%)

Education Interventions (UNHCR global strategy)

## Integration of refugee children

1. Construction of additional classrooms, latrines and learning facilities
2. Having a sustainable plan for maintaining the schools and ensuring qualitative education

# Case Study: Using Innovative Adolescent Girls Programming



Video - Girls Take the Lead project

# Program Approaches

---

Establishment of  
girl-friendly safe  
spaces

Better Life  
Options and  
Opportunities  
Model (BLOOM)

Men Engage  
approach

Youth Savings  
Group (YSG) &  
Enterprise Your  
Life program  
models (EYL)

### **1. Establishment of girl-friendly safe spaces:**

Locations in the camps accessible by girls and designated as “girls only” either at all times of the day or during specific timeframes each week. Services - empower girls to practice healthy behaviors, develop peer networks, strengthen their decision-making and goal setting skills, and build their knowledge of reproductive health, financial literacy, and report instances of violence.

### **2. Better Life Options and Opportunities Model (BLOOM):**

Effective in the gender transformative delivery of life skills and empowerment of adolescents, particularly girls. The curriculum aims to improve knowledge and behaviors relating to confidence, goal-setting, social capital, and SRH knowledge as is delivered through safe spaces using local mentors.

### **3. Men Engage approach:**

The Girls Take The Lead program sought to engage men and boys as allies in preventing violence against girls and women through weekly positive masculinities sessions and community-wide campaigns.

### **4. Youth Savings Group (YSG) & Enterprise Your Life program models (EYL):**

This economic empowerment component was designed to equip adolescent girls and boys to develop savings practices, build their financial literacy, and learn basic entrepreneurship skills.

# Project Outcomes

- ✓ At the end of the project 94% of girls in the camp could identify at least one safe space as compared to 74% in the baseline, and in the end-line report safe spaces were referred to as “the heart” of the project.
- ✓ Development of savings practices, financial literacy, and basic entrepreneurship skills + 20 savings groups managed to save 1,721,026 RWF (2,000 USD) during their first cycle.
- ✓ The savings groups were well received in the camps and the number of groups increased to 35 during the second cycle.
- ✓ 94% of girls were aware of ways to prevent pregnancy and 93% could identify signs of pregnancy. This represents a 19% and 28% increase from the pre-test.
- ✓ An increase of knowledge and attitudes on pregnancy prevention was observed in girls shifting from 60% to 83%. (pre/post tests)
- ✓ Community stakeholders, parents and adolescent girls and boys highlighted that the level of violence had decreased and many attributed this to an increase in awareness of the rights of girls.

# Challenges and lessons learned



- ✓ Male mentors needed ongoing training to enhance their facilitation skills, build additional knowledge on how to break down complex and deep rooted **norms** of gender based violence.
- ✓ The Men Engage curriculum needed to be more youth-friendly as younger boys found it difficult to grasp some of the content. Plan's Champions of Change curriculum for boys is recommended for future projects –e.g. **'empowering girls for equality'**
- ✓ Parents **'buy in'** is fundamental in ensuring adolescents girls participation.
- ✓ Youth Savings group ideal period to enhance prospects and sustainability.
- ✓ Resettlement of Mentors to the USA.

# Implication Girl's Education Programming

---



- ✓ Focus on life skills
- ✓ Integrate Appropriate livelihood options
- ✓ SRHR trainings
- ✓ Include key community actors, schools, parents and local leaders
- ✓ Male change agents
- ✓ Lastly let the girls lead their own programs they know what they want

*“Even if we say that they all go to school at required time, but here in the camp we have some children who like to go to school and others who refuse to go. For example, there is a time a child says that they will go to school after you buy for me shoes of 10,000 Rwf because she/he saw his/her colleague had the shoes. As a parent once you are not able to buy it for him/her, that becomes a reason for not returning to school or dropping out totally. Let me say from my side, every month I receive mVisa of 37,000 Rwf for a family size of 5 people, even to buy the food only, the money is insufficient for the whole month, now how can buy such shoes?”*

*-- Female Parent, Nyabiheke*



# Thank You!



*Sharon Chikanya*